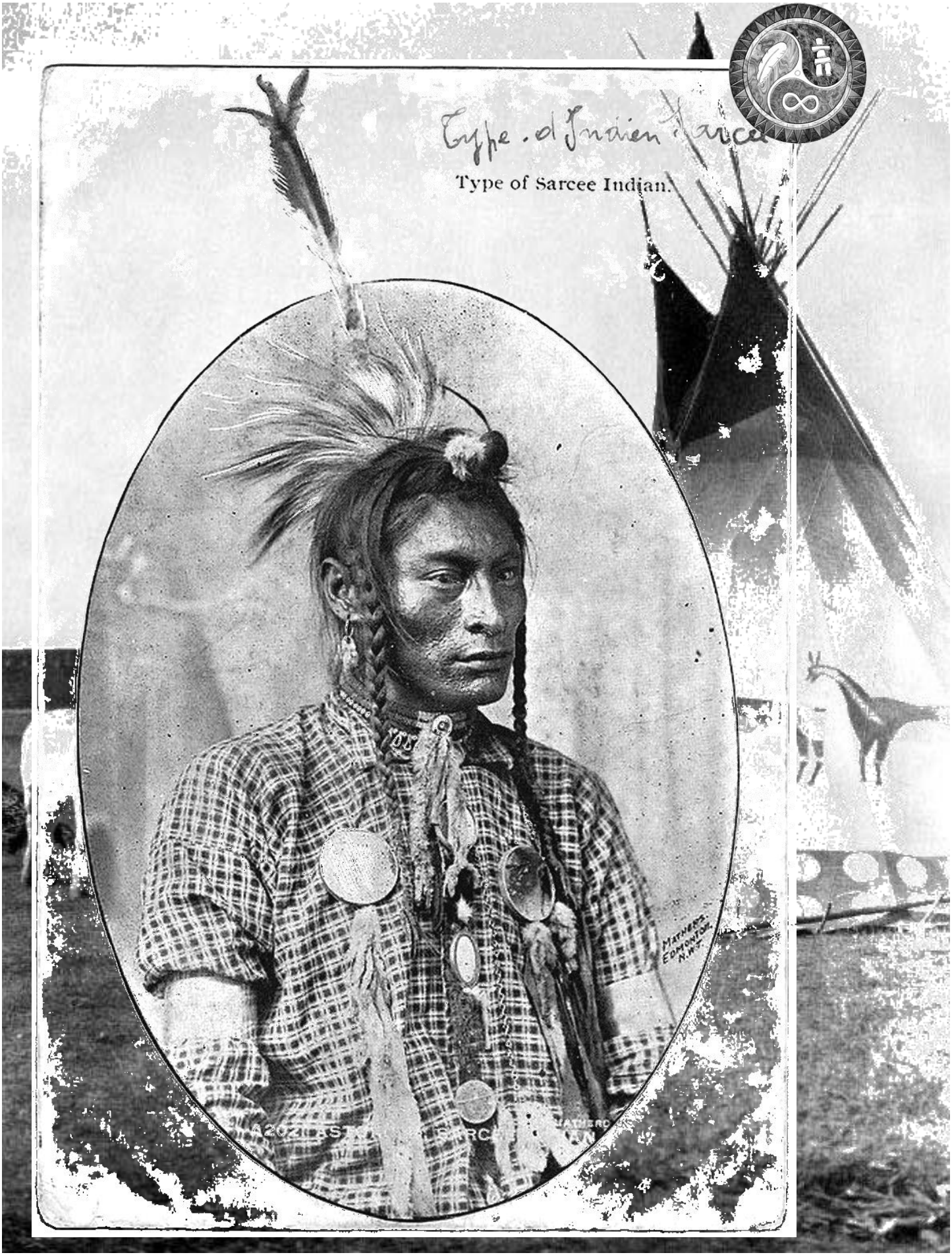

Above: **Portrait of Setukkomuccon—a Sarcée brave** who lived near Calgary, Alberta, Canada (c.1885): Photo by William Hanson Boorne.

On 24 July 1674, Alphonse Little Popular interviewed Mr. Antoine Lonesinger, who was born a Cree, in 1888, on the Red Pheasant Reserve No. 108—and he later moved to the Sweet Grass Reserve No. 113: (Both Reserves being in Saskatchewan, nearby the Battlefords). Mr. Lonesinger was known as a storyteller and singer, and had a command of the Cree language. Joanne Greenwood transcribed 16 pages of the interview—a copy of which was saved to the Saskatchewan Archives (Tape No. IH-030): (For complete biography, see IH-052, p. 11: Legend of Cut Knife Hill; Story of Black Rock, a Stoney warrior; Story of Chokecherry Wood, a Stoney warrior. This rendition of Mr. Lonesinger's stories has been cross-referenced with other research, including (as follows): Personal interviews by Floyd Favel with Jim Tootoosis (1995) and Leo Tootoosis (2010)—and Edward Ahenakew's "Voices of the Plains Cree" (Canadian Plains Research Centre, 1995), as well—to name just a few of the other sources referenced.

The Story of Kees-kih-koonan ("Broken Knife"), a Sarcée (Tsuut'ina)

A true pre-contact tale of how "the horse" first met *with* "the gun" on the Great Interior Prairies.

In the 1840s, the Cree were attacked by a group of Tsuut'ina (Sarcée) warriors from the Siksika or Blackfoot Confederacy to the southwest. The battle was fought just to the north of present-day Cut Knife on the highest hill in the surrounding region. Under their skillful leader, the Sarcée fought hard but were ultimately defeated. The Cree, however, were so impressed by the fighting abilities of the Sarcée leader that they named the battle site after him viz. Broken Knife's Lookout. When Europeans settlers later arrived in the area, they bastardized the name… calling the area after a mistranslated version of the name, calling their townsite—Cut Knife Hill.

Introduction

The Great Plains Culture Area, showing the approximate locations of Indian tribes circa 1820, after the acquisition of horses and migration onto the plains, and before displacement by non-Indians (with modern boundaries)

Sarcée Territory

Long before the town of **Cut Knife (Saskatchewan)** was established, before **Canada** became a country, before the ***fur traders*** arrived, the north-western territory that is now known as the **Prairie Provinces** *viz.* **Manitoba**, **Saskatchewan** and **Alberta** (sa well as **Minnesota**, the **Dakotas**, **Wyoming** and **Montana**) was occupied by numerous **Indigenous nations**, including (*as follows*): the **Plains Cree** and **Plains Ojibwe**, **Nakota (Assiniboine/Stoney)**, **Dakota/Lakota**, **Gros Ventré (Atsina)**, **Flathead**, and *the* **Piegan**, **Blood**, **Siksika** of the **Blackfoot Confederacy** as well as the **Tsuut'ina/Tsuu T'ina (Sarcée)**

The area around Cut Knife was then known as homeland of the Plains Cree.

Once part of the northern **Dane-zaa ('Beaver/Castor')** nation, the **Tsuut'ina** migrated south onto the **Great Interior Prairies** during the 1700s—prior to any written records of the area. During the 1810s, the **Sarcée** co-habited the **Beaver Hills** (*near present-day Edmonton*) with the **Plains Cree**. At some point, *however*, they came into ***conflict with the Cree*** and moved further to the southwest, eventually forming ***an alliance*** with the **Blackfoot Confederacy**. The **Beaver/Castor** tribes are still living in the **District of Athabasca** (northwest Alberta and Saskatchewan prior to the creation of these provinces as established by the **1905 Saskatchewan and Alberta Acts**), whereat are found the ***Chipewyan***, ***Slave***, ***Dog Rib***, and ***other Indian peoples***.

Tsuut'ina Language

The **Tsuut'ina language** is a pure **Athapascan dialect** allied to the ***Beaver language*** as ***transitional to the Slave and Chippewayan proper*** —as such, it is ***closely related to the languages of other Dene groups in northern Canada and Alaska***—*also* through ***Oregon*** and ***California*** into ***Northern Mexico***, including the ***Navajo Umpquas***, ***Apache***, and ***other tribes of the American Southwest***, which had migrated south along the ***Rocky Mountain foothills*** over one thousand years ago and developed separately, becoming ***the most southerly of the Athabaskan peoples***.

> "As the ***Indian languages are numerous***, so do they greatly vary in their effect upon the ear: We have the rapid ***Cootoonay*** of the ***Rocky Mountains*** and the stately ***Blackfoot*** of the plains, the slow, embarrassed ***Flathead*** of the Mountains; the smooth-toned ***Pierced-nosed***, the difficult ***Sussee*** **(*Sarcée*)** and ***Chippewayan***; the sing-song ***Assiniboine***, the deliberate ***Cree***, and the sonorous, majestic, ***Chippewayan***. The writer can corroborate these statements from his association with the tribes mentioned. Oftentimes has he tried to understand ***the Sarcée tongue***, as he has conversed with the natives in ***the Blackfoot tongue***, but the ***clicking sound*** of many of their words and the ***double guttural*** made it impossible. The whole of their language seems to consist of ***clicks*** and ***gutturals***… that it is ***difficult to distinguish one syllable from another***, and the study of the language had to be given up in despair. The ***women*** and ***children*** invariably speak ***the Sarcée language***, but the men use in addition the ***Blackfoot*** and ***Cree***."
>
> Horatio Hale,
> "*Ethnology in the United States Exploring Expedition*"

According to Bancroft's "*Native Races*," [1] their language is "harsh and guttural, difficult of enunciation, and unpleasant to the ear"—***a very deep guttural***, the ***sounds emanating from the throat***, which renders it difficult for **Eurofolk** to understand or acquire. The **Sarcée** speak their own language amongst themselves, but in conversation with others *they* use the ***Cree or Blackfoot languages***. Owing to their relationship to the **Blackfoot Confederacy**, and their proximity to the members of it, they use ***the Blackfoot language*** more than the Cree, and seem to be perfectly at home when using it.

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[1] **"The works of Hubert Howe Bancroft: The native races" (Vol. V): Primitive history"** (1886).

According to **W. A. Morris**, this work was largely written by **H. L. Oak**, **T. A. Harcourt**, **Albert Goldschmidt**, **W. M. Fisher** and **William Nemos** (see Oregon historical quarterly, v. 4, p. 301-310). "*Bancroft's work is a most laborious encyclopedia of all that is known up to to-day of the native races of the Pacific States, and it embraces all the inhabitants of the region to the west of the Mississippi from the Arctic Sea to the Isthmus of Panama. His aim... is not so much to write history as to provide materials out of which it may be eventually written by others.*"

Athabasca River Basin

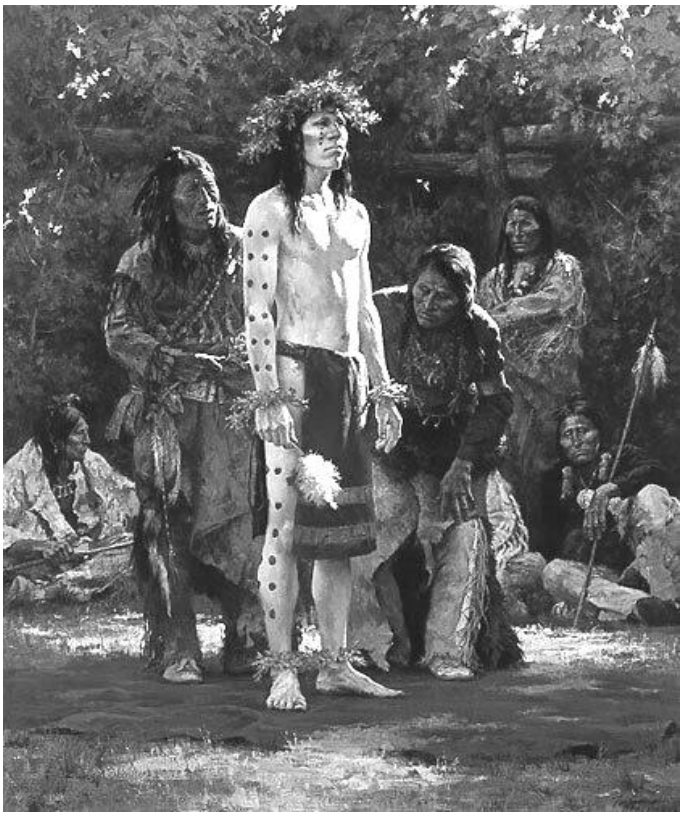
North Saskatchewan River

The name **'Tsúùt'ínà' ('*Sarcée*')** is believed to have originated from ***a Siksikáí'powahsin word*** (*Blackfoot language*) (*as follows*): **'*saxsii*,' '*saxsiiwak'* or '*sassewuck'*: translated as **'*Woody Country Indian*,' '*Bold People*' or '*people among the beavers*.'** In the 18th and 19th centuries, the ***North American Plains Indians of Athabaskan linguistic stock*** lived near the **Upper Saskatchewan River** and *the* **Athabaska River** (in the provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan).

Sarcée Political and Social Organization

The Sarcée have never been a large tribe: At the beginning of the 19th century they numbered "120 warriors, in 35 tents," or about 400 people. Their hunting grounds at this time were on the **Upper Saskatchewan River**, toward the **Rocky Mountains**.

They are ***similar in their political and social organization to the Blackfoot***, having ***a head chief over the tribe*** and ***a minor chief over each band***. They have *also* ***an annual sun dance***—which cannot be of Athapascan origin, but must have been learned from the Blackfoot. Indeed, in all their ***social customs***, they are essentially members of the **Blackfoot Confederacy**. They are ***sun worshippers***, whose religious ideas have been modified through contact with the Eurofolk. ***Dancing***, ***singing***, and ***throwing the wheel*** and ***arrows*** are ***native amusements***, to which they have added ***card playing*** (learned from the Eurofolk).



Howard Terpning: Preparing for the Sun Dance" "(Blood/Blackfoot)
Print prepared 1987

Historically, the Tsuut'ina believed in ***supernatural powers*** that could be obtained through ***a vision or dream*** and was enshrined in a ***tipi painting*** or ***a totemic medicine object***, such as a ***beaver bundl***e or ***pipe bundle***. The *quest for supernatural power* and the attainment of certain ***character traits***, such as ***bravery for men*** and ***chastity for women***—*infer*, were highly valued.

The ***boys run naked in early childhood***, having, *occasionally*, ***a garment or cloth around their loins***. The ***girls are always dressed***, *although* ***the raiment is oftentimes scanty***. The ***virginity of girls*** was guarded for participation in the **Sun Dance ceremony** [1] and some of the ***other ceremonies***.

With the notable exception of the Comanche, nearly all plains tribes placed exceptional importance in the annual **Sun Dance**, which stressed ***penance*** and in most cases ***self-torture by young warriors to demonstrate their bravery and ability to withstand pain***. Among the Blood people of the Blackfoot, the youth's body was ***painted with white clay***, and ***sage wreaths*** were affixed to head, wrists and ankles. Elders would ***cut incisions in the initiate's breasts***, then insert ***skewers of elderberry wood*** to which were attached ***rawhide ropes***, firmly tied at the other end to ***a center pole*** upon which might rest the ***head or skull of a buffalo***. After prayer the young man was ***expected to dance against the rope until the skewers tore loose from his flesh***. The ***scars*** remained the rest of his life, attesting to his courage.

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[1] The **'sun dance ceremony'** is best represented in the 1970 Western film **"A Man Called Horse"**—said to be an authentic depiction of American Indian life in the Dakota territory of about 1820. The movie stars **Richard Harris** as ***Lord John Morgan***, an English peer cast somewhat adrift in the American West and ***captured by Sioux Indians***. He lives with them and begins to understand their way of life. Eventually, he is accepted as part of the tribe and aspires to become their leader. The film is a ***directed by Elliot Silverstein***, ***produced by Sandy Howard***, ***written by Jack DeWitt***—and is based on a short story by the Western writer **Dorothy M. Johnson**: "A Man Called Horse," which was first published in 1950 in ***Collier's magazine*** and again in 1968 in Johnson's book **"***Indian Country*."

The **'sun dance ceremony'** is also In the **"Return of a Man Called Horse"**—a 1976 Western film ***directed by Irvin Kershner*** and ***written by Jack DeWitt***. **Richard Harris** reprises his role as **'Horse,'** a British aristocrat who became a member of a tribe of **Lakota Sioux**, who returns to America after dreaming of the Indians who had once adopted him needing his help. It was followed by a sequel in 1983, **"Triumphs of a Man Called Horse**."

According to the teachings of the **Northern Paiute** ***spiritual leader*** **Wovoka** (renamed Jack Wilson), proper practice of the dance would ***reunite the living with spirits of the dead***, bring ***the spirits to fight on their behalf***, ***end westward expansion of the detested White people***, and bring ***peace***, ***prosperity***, and ***unity to Native American peoples throughout the region***. Preaching ***a message of universal love***, he often presided over ***circle dances***, which ***symbolized the sun's heavenly path across the sky***. Practice of the **Ghost Dance** movement was believed to have contributed to ***Lakota resistance to assimilation under the Dawes Act***. In the **Wounded Knee Massacre** of **December 1890**, ***United States Army forces killed*** *at least* ***153 Miniconjou and Hunkpapa from the Lakota people***.

"Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee" is ***a 2007 Western historical drama television film*** adapted from the 1970 book of the same name by **Dee Brown**. The film was ***written by Daniel Giat***, ***directed by Yves Simoneau*** and ***produced by HBO Films***. The book on which the movie is ***based on*** is ***a history of Native Americans in the American West in the 1860s and 1870s***, focusing upon ***the transition from traditional ways of living to living on reservations*** and their treatment during that period.

The Wounded Knee massacre was not the end of the **Ghost Dance** ***religious movement***.

Scene of the ‘sun dance’ ritual from “A Man Called Horse” (1970)

Courtship began with ***flirting during chores***. In ***traditional Tsuut'ina culture***, the family *usually* ***arranged marriages***, and ***the gifts exchanged reflected family status***.

At the ***early age of twelve or thirteen*** the ***girls are sold in marriage***; sometimes to an ***old man***, who may have ***several wives***. **Polygamy** was practiced, mainly ***sororal polygyny***—in which two or more sisters share one husband or more, although not to so great a degree as in ***times of war***, when the men were slain and the ***women compelled to marry members of their own tribe***.

Newly-wed couples customarily lived with ***the wife's family***… the daughter's husband supported his wife's family… and hunted for them, until the couple acquired enough property to be on their own. There were *always* ***more women in the tribe than men***—as warriors were constantly killed on raids or in battle. Men were *thus* obligated to marry a deceased brother's wife—a form of ***adelphic polyandry*** (comparable to Levirate marriage). [1]

In the ***long winter evenings*** the Sarcée families will gather in their ***lodges***, or in their ***modern log houses***, and, with ***drum and song***, have a **'*tea dance*,'** where tea is drunk in profusion and the well-filled ***pipe*** is passed around. ***Stories of the old buffalo days*** are told, and as ***the aged men speak vividly of battles, scalps, hairbreadth escapes, horses, and women captured, and glorious wounds***, the hearts of the ***young men*** are thrilled, and they ***long for the time when they may follow in the footsteps of their forefathers***; but when they step beyond the lodge they see ***the agent's house***, and they are at once confronted with the fact *that* the ***pale-face devils*** dwell in the land, and *he* has ***come to rule***. Thoughts too deep for words rankle in their breasts, and fain would they live ***a free hunter's life*** and taste the ***sweets of war***.

Brought into ***contact with civilization native customs were dying out***.

The Land Grabbers and Disenfranchised Indians

After **Emperor Napoléon Bonaparte** of France and the fledgling **United States** agreed upon the **Louisiana Purchase** [2] and after

Sgt. w. b. Wilde

Sgt.-Maj. Sam Steele

Lt.-Gov. Mackintosh

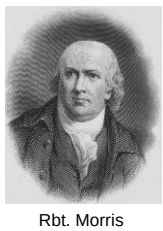
Si'k-okskitsis

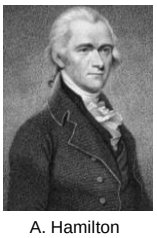
Two of Si'k-okskitsis' brothers—***Left Hand*** and ***Bear Back Bone*** were released on November 5th to help capture the fugitive. In exchange for their cooperation, Steele allowed the release of Left Hand's sick child and dropped charges of cattle-stealing against the son of Bear Back Bone.

Travelling between the **Piegan Indian Reserve** and the **Blood Reserve**, ***Si'k-okskitsis continued to thwart NWMP attempts to entrap him***. On November 9th police picked up his trail near the Piegan Reserve and *on* the following day, he was ***sighted by a patrol of Piegan scouts*** near **Pincher Creek**. **NWMP Sergeant William Brock Wilde** joined the pursuit and when he closed on Charcoal *he* was ***shot and killed***. The following night Charcoal arrived at his brothers' camp on the Blood Reserve where he was captured in the early morning of November 12th and turned over to the NWMP after ***an unsuccessful suicide attempt***.

Si'k-okskitsis was tried and convicted at **Fort Macleod** for ***the murder of Medicine Pipe Man*** and ***Sergeant w. b. Wilde***. Although ***the first conviction was successfully appealed***, the second was upheld… and **Si'k-okskitsis was hanged on the morning of 16 March 1897**. Despite assurances from **Lieutenant-Governor Charles Herbert Mackintosh** that the body would be turned over to his family for an Indian burial, Charcoal was claimed as ***an eleventh-hour convert to Christianity*** and he was buried in the **Roman Catholic cemetery** at **Stand Off** (Alberta) on the Blood reserve.

Napoléon


Rbt. Morris


A. Hamilton

John Adams

At the time of the Louisiana Purchase, the **13 Colonies** had around $7 million dollars in revenues and were already running a $3.2 million dollar deficit. Like all governments, and especially because they didn't yet collect taxes, they had no choice but to go to ***a Rothschildean bank*** *viz.* the **First Bank of the United States**—opened by **Robert Morris** and **Alexander Hamilton**. **The Rothschilds** were not only ***in charge of the* Bank of England**… and ***financing the* Napoleonic Wars**, but ***they had monetary control of the fledgling American democracy***—and after putting George Washington's successor, **John Adams**, in the newly-built **White House** in 1800, they had successfully isolated the country's Chief Executive. It was time to expand westward.

The purchase ***doubled the size of the United States***, greatly strengthened the country materially and strategically, provided ***a powerful impetus to westward expansion***, and confirmed ***the doctrine of 'manifest destiny' and implied powers of the federal Constitution***.

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[1] **Si'k-okskitsis (Charcoal, or *literally*: Black Wood Ashes)** *son of Red Plume and Killed Twice* was a **Blood Indian warrior** and ***holy man***. He was related through one of his father's wives to **Peenaquim (Seen From Afar)—*the leading war chief of the Blood tribe of the Mamyowi*** (*Fish Eaters band*): Peenaquim was a great chief, having 10 wives and 100 horses, but was among the first of his band to die in ***a devastating smallpox epidemic*** during the winter of 1869–70—chieftainship was taken for a few months by his older brother, **Kyiyo-siksinum (Black Bear)**, and when the latter died in 1870 his nephew **Mékaisto (Red Crow)** became chief of the Bloods and famous in his own right (*q.v.*).

When **Si'k-okskitsis** (Charcoal) was still young, his family broke from the Fish Eaters, then led by Mékaisto (Red Crow), to form a band of their own. This band had ***a poor reputation within the tribe*** and was ***accused of indolence and trouble-making***. In 1880, an Indian Reserve was established for his band—but Si'k-okskitsis did not adjust well to life on the Reservation… and, in 1883, he was ***arrested for killing a steer belonging to a nearby rancher***. For this crime he spent ***a year in the North-West Mounted Police jail at Fort Macleod***. After his release he vowed he would never be put behind bars again.

NB: One need only remember how **Are-je-wam (Scraping Hide)** was made a criminal for killing an Indian Agent—Are-je-wam's nine-year-old son had died of starvation because the Indian Agent was stealing decent rations from the reservation and distributing ***bone, fat and maggoty-green meat*** to the ***'redskin savages'*** in his care. A similar misfortune befell **Jean-Baptiste Kitchi-Manito-Waya (Almighty Voice)** *son of Plains Saulteaux Indian Sinnookeesick* (*Sounding Sky*) *and Natchookoneck* (*Spotted Calf of Many Colours*) *daughter of Willow Cree Chief **Kāpeyakwāskonam*** (*One Arrow*)—a legendary Cree from the One Arrow Indian Reserve in Duck Lake area.

With no more battles or raids in which to participate now that the Bloods had given up their ***traditional nomadic, hunting life-style*** for the reserve, **Si'k-okskitsis** turned to ***native religion***, joining the sacred **Dog Society** and *later* the **Horn Society**. In addition, he encouraged **Anu'tsis-tsis-aki (Pretty Wolverine Woman)—*his fourth wife***, to participate in the **Motokix Society**—***the only secret society for women on the Blood reserve***. By the mid 1890s she had become one of the leaders of the society and Si'k-okskitsis was recognized as 'a holy man.'

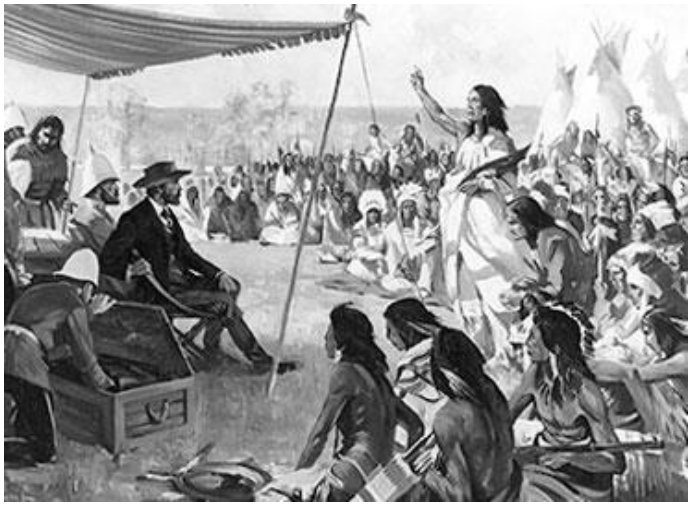
Soon after taking another wife, **Iyokaki (Sleeping Woman)**, in 1896, he learned *that* ***Anu'tsis-tsis-aki was having an affair with one of her young cousins*** named **Nina'msko'taput-sikumi (Medicine Pipe Man returning with a Crane War Whoop)**: Incest was a great shame amongst the proud Blood Indians. On September 30th, Si'k-okskitsis found them together and shot the cousin… who fell dead upon his adulterous wife… seemingly without a wound—for ***the bullet had entered through the eye***. ***Reservation life*** and ***the White man's rules*** were forgotten… and Si'k-okskitsis returned to ***the traditional ways of his forefathers***. Having killed a man, *however*, he believed that his life was over and that he would be hanged for his crime. To prepare for his ***entry into the land of the dead*** he reverted to ***two ancient customs of the Blood Indians***: he decided 1) ***to kill an important person whose spirit would announce his coming***, and 2) ***to kill Anu'tsis-tsis-aki and himself so that their spirits would travel together and she would eternally be his slave***.

On October 12th, the body of **Nina'msko'taput-sikumi** was found and the wound discovered… ***Si'k-okskitsis 'attempted' to kill Mékaisto*** and ***'shot and wounded' a farm instructor, Edward McNeill***. He then ***fled the reserve*** with of his ***two wives***, ***a daughter***, ***a mother-in-law***, and ***two stepsons***, going south to **Lee Creek** and then ***to the Blood Indian timber limit*** *near the Montana border*. In the mean time ***one of the biggest man-hunts in western Canadian history was being organized*** by **NWMP Superintendent Samuel Benfield Steele**.

Charcoal's camp was discovered but, when a force of more than 24 armed men attacked on October 17th, he escaped on foot with his wives and a stepson; that evening ***he stole two NWMP horses and fled north*** toward the **Porcupine Hills**. By the next day the search party had grown to more than 100 mounted police and Indian scouts, but ***Si'k-okskitsis continued to elude police patrols***, traveling long distances and stealing fresh horses when his mounts were worn out. On October 30th, by which time his stepson and both wives had escaped him, ***Sam Steele of the Mounties*** had his entire family arrested to keep them from aiding him: 26 people including 2 children (aged 5 and 1 year old).

[2] Once **Napoléon** had control of **Spain**, the **Louisiana Territory** was transferred to **France**. The **1803 Louisiana Purchase** was the acquisition of the territory of Louisiana from France by the ***American government viz. the 13 Colonies***—approximately 827,000 square miles of land west of the Mississippi River was sold in return for $15 million dollars, or *approximately* $18 dollars per square mile.

Canada re-purchased Rupert's Lands from the **Hudson's Bay Company**, there were still ***no laws governing trade*** with native inhabitants of the **Great Interior Plains**, so ***gold seekers***, ***fur traders***, ***whiskey traders***, ***wolvers***, ***buffalo hide agents*** and ***many other shady characters*** moved in with a vengeance. What resulted was ***epidemics*** of ***small pox*** and ***measles***, ***an influx of alcohol***, and ***the buffalo were rapidly depleting*** in numbers. The **First Nations** on both sides of the border wanted to protect their way of life—making it easy for ***government agents*** and ***land speculators*** to connive them into believing that ***making treaties was the only way to accomplish this***.



The **1855 Lame Bull Treaty** in the U.S. was sold to the natives as a means of providing ***security for the Blackfoot people*** by imposing ***a neutral hunting zone*** between the Blackfoot people and other southern nations. It was ***advocated as a peace treaty, not land surrender***, but, *in effect*, ***it pushed Blackfoot territory back*** from the **Yellowstone River** to the **Musselshell River**. Then, in 1874, the area bordered by ***Birch Creek, Marias, Missouri and Sun Rivers*** was ceded by **Act of Congress** In the same year, the **NWMP** were founded and sent to ***southern Alberta*** under the pretense of controlling problems with ***shady newcomers***. And, in 1876, two weeks after the annihilation of ***Custer's 7th Calvary*** at the **Battle of Little Big Horn**,[3] a delegation of Sioux came to meet with **Isapo-muxika** (Crowfoot) requesting he join them in their fight against the Whites. The Blackfoot people already knew what had happened as there had been ***a dozen Blackfoot tipis*** among the hundreds that Custer stumbled upon that fateful day. Immediately after that battle, all the Indian groups dispersed and returned to their traditional territories… when-so and whereof the Blackfoot delegation haply bragged about what had occurred and tried to rouse the braves for war. But, Isapo-muxika responded that he would not go to war unless it was for his own people.

The Beginning of the End for the Sarcée

In the early-19th century ***the westerly Plains Indians acquired horses***, whereas ***their traditional enemies to the east viz. the Cree were trading for guns***—and ***intertribal warfare increased*** to such an extent that ***several tribes, including the Sarcée, allied for mutual protection***, forming the **Blackfoot Confederacy**, which included **Blood**, **Piegan** and **Stoney**, and ***allied with the Sarcée***. Nevertheless, they continued to suffer from ***attacks of the Cree and other tribes***—and their numbers were still farther reduced by ***epidemics***, particularly the ***smallpox epidemics*** of 1836 and 1870 and one of ***scarlet fever*** in 1856—leaving more dead than alive.

John Chantler McDougall

NWMP Inspector
Maj.-Gen. E. S. Smyth

Jack C. E. Denny

Col P. Robertson-Ross

Hon. David Laird

Lt. Col. James Macleod

Gov. Alexander Morris

HRH Queen Victoria

Sir John A. Macdonald

DM: 'Masonic hand-in-vest' sign

[3] The **Battle of the Little Bighorn**, also commonly referred to as **Custer's Last Stand**, is known to the Lakota and other Plains Indians as the **Battle of the Greasy Grass**.

In late-1875, ***Sioux and Cheyenne Indians*** defiantly left their reservations, outraged over the continued intrusions of Whites into their sacred lands in the Black Hills. They gathered in Montana with the great warrior Sitting Bull to fight for their lands. The following spring, two victories over the US Cavalry emboldened them to fight on in the summer of 1876. To force the large Indian army back onto their reservations, the Army dispatched three columns to attack in coordinated fashion, one of which contained Lt. Colonel George Custer and the 210 troops of the doomed U.S. Army's 7th Cavalry Unit.

Lt.-Col. Custer

Capt. Benteen

Maj. Reno

On 25 June 1876, an armed engagement between federal troops against a mixed band of Lakota Sioux, Cheyenne and Arapaho warriors was fought along the ridges, steep bluffs, and ravines of the Little Bighorn River, in south-central Montana Territory.

Custer deployed troops in a coordinated effort under **Captain Frederick Benteen** to prevent their escape through the upper valley of the Little Bighorn River. **Major Marcus Reno**—*a drunken coward* was to pursue the group, cross the river, and charge the women and children, sick and elderly in the Indian village with the remaining troops under his command.

After the battle, the Indians came through and stripped the bodies and mutilated all the uniformed soldiers, believing that the soul of a mutilated body would be forced to walk the earth for all eternity and could not ascend to heaven. Inexplicably, they stripped Custer's body and cleaned it, but did not scalp or mutilate it.

Outraged over the death of a popular Civil War hero on the eve of the Centennial, the nation demanded and received harsh retribution. The Black Hills dispute was quickly settled by redrawing the boundary lines, placing the Black Hills outside the reservation and open to white settlement. Within a year, the Sioux nation was defeated and broken. "Custer's Last Stand" was their last stand as well.

In 1874 the **Dominion government** sent **Col P. Robertson-Ross**, ***adjutant general of the Militia of Canada***, to assess the situation in what is now **Treaty No. 7 territory**. Robertson-Ross reported *that* over 10,000 people lived in the area, acknowledged ***increasing conflict***, and ***recommended an immediate police presence***.

> "The institutions of 'Law and Order,' as understood in civilized communities, are wholly unknown."
>
> Lieutenant W^{m} Butler, 1871

John A. MacDonald immediately began organizing *a police force*—***mercenary mounted riflemen*** *which* "should not be expressly military but should be styled ***'police'*** and have the military bearing of the ***Irish Constabulary***"—a "mixed force *of* 'pure White' Français and English, and half-breeds, *too*—after the British model of counter-acting religious and racial strife in colonial India."

Confirming Butler's assessment: "A large military force *was* not required, but *that* a certain 'force' would be found indispensable for 'the security of the country'."

> "To prevent bloodshed & preserve order"
>
> Col. P. Robertson-Ross, 1872,
> Commanding Officer of the Canadian Militia
> 2nd Western Reconnaissance

Robertson-Ross' report was a contributing factor in **Sir John A. Macdonald** establishing the **North-West Mounted Police**. In the summer of 1874 the NWMP under the command of **Lieut.-Col James Macleod** dissolved the ***American wolfer's whisky forts*** [4] and reported back to **Ottawa** that ***the First Nations were ready to negotiate a treaty***.

Treaty No. 7

In the summer of 1875, **Isapo-muxika** (Crowfoot)—one of the Siksika leaders, spoke with ***Methodist missionary*** **John McDougall**, who had previously worked for the government, and *who* assured him that treaties were being planned. Isapo-muxika *also* spoke to **Major-General Edward Selby Smith** of the NWMP, about Ottawa's plans; Smith too assured Isapo-muxika that plans were in the works and *that* the government would be fair to the First Nations

On 22 September 1877, along with the **Siksika** (Blackfoot), **Pikuni** (Piegan), **Kainai** (Blood) and **Stoney-Nakota**, and the **Tsuu T'ina** (Sarcée) signed a treaty ceding their hunting grounds to the Dominion Government—**Treaty No. 7**—known as the **Blackfoot Treaty**, which was arranged by **Lieutenant-Governor Laird** and **Lieut.-Col. J. F. Macleod**—however, ***the Blackfoot Nation was in conflict with the Stoney-Nakoda***; this was a significant factor in the push for a treaty as ***conflict between these Indian Nations was increasing*** as a result of ***the depleted buffalo population***.

There were ***concerns about survival***, as these Nations struggled to withstand the ***increasing pressure on food sources due to encroaching pioneer settlement***, and ***the displacement of Plains Métis and Cree populations***, along with ***diseases*** such as ***small pox***. Another issue was the ***American 'wolfer' whisky forts***—the introduction of ***alcohol*** was proving to have a detrimental effect on the First Nations communities. In addition to addressing rising conflict and food scarcity, ***the government had a vested interest in securing land*** in what is now Alberta.

Mékaisto (Red Crow)

Chula (Stamixo'tokan, Bull Head)
Chief of the Tsuut'ina: (c.1890-94)
Photographer/Illustrator: Alexander Ross

Tȟatȟáŋka Íyotake (Sitting Buffalo Bull)
Chief of the Hunkpapa Lakota

Isapo-muxika (Crowfoot)
Head Chief of the Blood tribe
Photographed in Québec

In 1871 the Dominion government had promised British Columbia that ***a railway*** would reach the province within 10 years to establish adhesion to the ***confederacy***; the First Nations' land needed to be ceded in order to fulfill this promise! **NB:** The ***transcontinental railway*** provided **Rothschild's "City & Crown"** ***viz.*** **the Bank of England** a shorter, cheaper, overland route across Dominion lands to transport British troops to its' possessions in **India** and **Cathay (*China*)**.

Before the ***Dominion government*** could go ahead with ***its plans to build railways*** and ***establish pioneer settlements in the west*** it had to deal somehow with the people who already lived there (*i.e., figure out a tricky way to steal their land out from under them as quickly and cheaply as possible*). Several different First Nations groups hunted buffalo throughout the northwest, *specifically* the ***Plains Cree and Ojibwa***, ***Assiniboine***, ***Chippewa*** and ***the tribes of the Blackfoot Confederacy***—the ***Blackfoot***, ***Blood***, ***Piegan*** and ***Sarcée***.

By 1870, ***the bison-hunting way of life*** was already threatened by ***White encroachment*** and ***the introduction of the rifle*** which was rapidly wiping out the buffalo herds.

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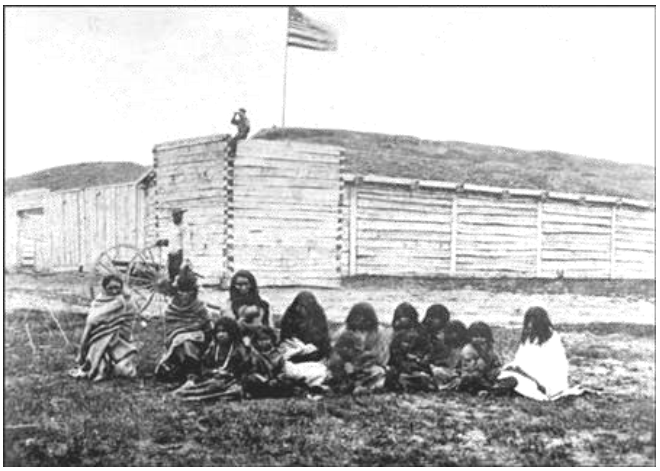
[4] Two white 'wolf hunters' from Fort Benton, Montana built a trade post at the junction of the Belly & St. Mary's Rivers, (south-west of present Lethbridge), called Fort Hamilton: it quickly became known as Whoop-Up, the most notorious of the whiskey forts …



Fort Whoop-Up

Fort Whoop-Up: a notorious trading place located in the Cyprus Hills badlands, frequented by American wolfers, who hated the Buffalo & hunted them (to near-extinction) for the hides, leaving the carcasses to rot, unapologetically, in inexplicable numbers: the wolfers, though, hated the Indian even worse, & took evil pleasure in the illegal trading of FIREWATER – made from kerosene and/or raw alcohol, (from which the concoction derives its name): mixed with red ink & the juice of boiled coarse tobacco, soap, bluestone, & flavoured, if so, with laudanum, molasses or sugar, & whatever spices were on hand. Gunpowder was often added to whoop-em-up!

& killed a number of (innocent) Assiniboine Indians, including women & children, at the Cyprus Hills, (in the south-west corner of Saskatchewan), in a dispute over the alleged theft of some horses.

Mistahi-maskwa

Pitikwahanapiwiyin

Native leaders **Pitikwahanapiwiyin** (Poundmaker) [5] and **Mistahi-maskwa** (Big Bear) [6] realized they were losing their main source of food and they were willing to negotiate with the Canadian government. But they knew they needed more than a reserve and a small cash allowance to carve out a new way of life. To establish ***an agricultural society*** they needed ***farm animals***, ***wagons***, ***horses***, ***tools*** and ***equipment***—and ***farm instructors*** to advise them and help them adjust to the new way of life.

The **Treaty Commissioner** promised them all these things… but never delivered… and what they did give the **'*redskin savages*'** was very much less than what was promised—such as giving one band the horses, tools and other equipment to plough with… which they had to share with other bands… so that by the time the time to seed the land hadst come and gone, there were still families which hadst not had time to turn the soil; the same is true of the time of harvest… whereas some crops hadst not the time to be reaped… and so, these rotted on the stock in the fields with the coming of the snow. And, the meat rations issued them was bony and/or rancid and rotten and/or maggoty. Time and time-again the indigenous leaders tried to make the government live up to its treaty promises… but, some 150 years later, the First Nations are yet fighting a losing battle with our deceptive parliamentarians up on 'the Hill' in Ottawa.[7]

Tired of waiting for the government to take action, the **Siksika**, **Pikuni**, and **Kainai** met in the fall of 1875 and prepared a letter to **Governor Alexander Morris—*the last Lieutenant Governor of Manitoba*** outlining their concerns. That same year, the Hunkpapa **Lakota**, who had recently won the **Battle of Little Bighorn**—*supra* against the Americans, arrived in Canada along with their chief, **Thathánka Íyotake** (*Sitting Buffalo Bull*), who met with **Isapo-muxika** (Crowfoot). This meeting caught Ottawa's attention; the Dominion government had so far negotiated treaties peacefully… but was circumspect of the Lakota… therefore, they now preempted the threat of war *that* the Lakota posed and forced the Sarcée onto ***a small tract of land*** (bordering the Blackfoot Reserve on the north side of the Bow River). The Sarcée grudgingly accepted this, as they would have preferred a reserve further west—and ***they steadily declined*** in numbers until 1920.

On 22 September 1877, the Dominion representatives dictated the ***final terms*** of **Treaty No. 7** such that the First Nations living within the boundaries cede *roughly* 130,000 square kilometers from the **Rocky Mountains** to **Cypress Hills**, and the **Red Deer River** to the **49th Parallel** *viz.* the **American border.** All Nations retained their right to use the land for hunting, fishing, and trapping. The treaty *also* dictated that reserve lands would be established with each family of five receiving 2.59 square miles (6.47 square kilometers) (*proportionately*). The **Siksika**, **Tsuu T'ina**, and **Kainai** established reserves along the ***Bow River***; the **Pikuni** at ***Crow's Creek***; and the **Stoney-Nakoda** near the ***Methodist Mission in Morleyville*** on the recommendation of John McDougall.

Each person was to receive ***a one-time payment*** of $12 for signing the treaty with ***annuities*** of: $25 *per* head chief, $15 *per* minor chief or councilor, and $5 *per* person. All ***chiefs*** and ***councilors*** were allotted ***new suits every three years***—and each chief was to receive ***a Winchester rifle*** along with ***$2000 for ammunition*** for the band. Chiefs were *also* to receive ***a bull***, and families to receive ***cattle in***

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[5] **Pitikwahanapiwiyin**, called "Poundmaker" (1826-86), was a **Plains Cree chief** in the northwest, who was re-known as ***a peacemaker*** and ***a defender of his people***, was recognized as ***a skilled orator*** and ***a wise leader***—by *both* Native and non-Native communities. He emerged as ***a political leade***r during the tumultuous years surrounding the ***extension of the numbered treaty system*** and the ***influx of settlers*** into *present-day* **Saskatchewan**.

According to **Cree oral history**, Pitikwahanapiwiyin got his name because of ***a special ability to attract buffalo*** into a **"buffalo pound"** (somewhat resembling a huge corral): It was ***a very dangerous thing to do***. Sometimes a herd of buffalo were stampeded into such a trap; on other occasions, the buffalo were drawn in quietly by **a "pound-make**r**" *dressed in a buffalo pelt*** and ***using a bell*** to capture the herd's attention. One time, it is said that Pitikwahanapiwiyin lured 500 buffalo into his pound, *therefore* earning him the name **"*Poundmaker*."**

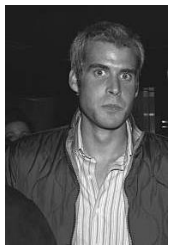
[6] **Mistahi-maskwa** (Big Bear, known in French as Gros Ours) was ***a powerful and popular Cree chief*** who played many pivotal roles in Saskatchewan history. He was born circa 1825, near Jackfish Lake, north of present-day North Battleford—and he died on 17 January 1888 on **Little Pine Reserve**. His father, **Black Powder**, an **Ojibwa**, was ***Chief of a small mixed-band of Cree and Ojibwa*** and his mother was a member of one of these nations.

By 1871, Mistahi-maskwa was the leading chief of the **Prairie River People**—and, by 1874 he headed a camp of 65 lodges (*approximately* 520 people).

Although Mistahi-maskwa appeared at the ***negotiations***, he refused to sign **Treaty No. 6**: he was the first major chief on the prairies to do so. Over the next six years, he continued to refuse treaty. Finally, on 8 December 1882, faced with destitution and starvation, Mistahi-maskwa signed an adhesion to the treaty. At this time his following had dwindled to 114 people.

[7] Cf., **PM Stephen Harper**'s destruction of the **Navigable Waters Protection Act (NWPA)**—*one of Canada's oldest laws protecting bodies of water across the country* (first introduced in 1882), in ***canceling and gutting environmental laws*** and ***selling out Canada's myriad lakes, rivers and streams to big business, corporate interests and foreign investment*** under the redefined **'Navigation Protection Act' (NPA)**—covering only 97 lakes, 62 rivers and the three oceans on Canada's coasts. **Transport Minister Denis Lebel**, urged by the **Rothschildean Shell Canada** and *its* **Rio Tinto Group**, rolled over like the dogs they are and, turning belly-up, surrendered without a fight to industrial projects such as **'fracking'** in ***oilsands development*** or ***mining extraction*** by ***a syndicate made up of thirty of England's largest companies*** and ***a few Canadian investment houses***, headed by N. M. Rothschild & Sons—and ***a Montréal investment company*** called **United North Atlantic Securities Ltd.**

Joey Smallwood



Anthony de Rothschild

PM Stephen Harper

Joseph "Joey" Smallwood—*the main force who brought the* ***Dominion of Newfoundland*** *into the* ***Canadian Confederation*** *in 1949, becoming the first premier of Newfoundland and serving until 1972* was commanded by **Anthony de Rothschild** to close all crown lands in the **Maritime Provinces** to prospectors so *that* the **Rothschilds** could choose a fifty-thousand-square mile concession out of the seventy-one thousand unstaked claims in **Labrador** and **Newfoundland**—giving the Rothschilds ***first choice of mineral, power and lumber resources*** in an area considerably larger than the combined size of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island.

proportion to their family size. Finally, ***residential schools*** were to be established with ***teachers' salaries paid by the government***.

It was ***the last of the treaties made in the 1800s***. The next treaty would not be signed for another 20 years. The signing of Treaty 7 opened up 50,000 sq miles to development, ***an integral factor in the building and completion of the transcontinental railroad*** that the Dominion government had promised **British Columbia** as part of their ***negotiation*** into **Confederation**. Without this treaty, the railroad may not have been built and Canada may have had very different borders then the ones we enjoy now.

The End

Alexander Henry the Elder [8] wrote of the Sarcée in his journal:

> "The Sarcée are a distinct nation, and have an entirely different language from any other nation of the plains, and very difficult to acquire from the many guttural sounds it contains. Their land was formerly on the north side of the Saskatchewan, but they have now removed to the south side, and dwell commonly on the southward of the Beaver Hills, near the Slave Indians—with whom they are at peace. They have the name of being a brave and warlike people, whom the neighboring nations always appear desirous of being on amicable terms with. Their customs and manners seem to be nearly the same as the Crees, and their dress is the same. Their language bears a great resemblance to that of the Chipewyans; many words are exactly the same, from which their apparent emigration from the northward gives every cause to suppose them of that nation. They affect to despise the Slave Indians for their brutish and dastardly manners, and although comparatively few in number, frequently set them at defiance. They form ninety tents, containing about one hundred and fifty men bearing arms."

The Tsúùt'ínà (Sarcée) are of medium height, very few tall men being among them: the women, especially, being small. They were noted among other northern Plains tribes for their ***tanned bison robes*** and ***fine buckskins***, *likewise*, for their **handcrafted saddles** and ***cherry-wood bows***. As early as 1910 the Tsuut'ina were *also* noted as ***farmers*** and ***cattlemen***… and they continued in these occupations to the present time.

During ***the old buffalo days*** they exhibited their pride in beautiful dresses and fine buffalo-skin lodges, but ***the departure of the buffalo*** reduced them to ***poverty***, the ***lodges were used for moccasins***, and many of their ***horses were sold to obtain food and clothing***. The traders and the **"*old timers*"** in the country were ever suspicious of these people, believing them to be deceitful and, *consequently*, were on their guard against treachery. Like the other plain tribes, they were good hunters, delighting in hunting the buffalo, and when they had secured an abundance of food, spent their days and nights feasting and gambling.

By 1879 the buffalo were gone and the ***people were hungry***, ***government rations proved totally inadequate*** and the Sarcée were facing ***certain death by starvation***. In the summer of 1880, the Sarcée were camped upon the **Old Man's River**, along with some ***Blackfoot and Blood Indians***, where they were being supplied with rations by the Dominion government—the buffalo having left the plains and gone south to the plains and valleys of the **Missouri and Yellowstone Rivers**: (It was then estimated that the Sarcée numbered *about* seven hundred, although the government agent thought that there were not more than three or four hundred). [9]

Almighty Voice

Lieutenant W[m] Butler
Inspector Cecil Denny

Interpreter Jerry Potts

In 1880, under **Chief Chula**, the tribe loaded tipis, possessions, and families into wagons and drove westward toward **Fort Calgary**, avowing never to return to the **Bow River Reserve**. At Fort Calgary there was a confrontation with the **North-West Mounted Police** under the command of **Inspector Cecil Denny**. Fortunately bloodshed was averted and the Sarcée agreed to remove temporarily to Fort MacLeod until a new reserve could be found. In 1881 Chula and his people moved to their new reserve located beside the **Elbow River**, a few miles southwest of Calgary, Alberta. The Sarcée have remained on this reserve to the present day.

The **early-21st century population** has been *estimated* as **~1000 Sarcée descendants**… and an *estimated* **~47 fluent speakers of the Tsuut'ina language**, with another smaller segment of the population who can understand fluently.

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[8] **Alexander Henry the Elder** (August 1739 – 4 April 1824) was *one of the leading pioneers of the British-Canadian fur trade*, following the **British Conquest of Nouvelle France**; a ***partner*** in the **North-West Company**; and a ***founding member and vice-chairman*** of the **Beaver Club**.

Alexander Henry

Julia Calcutt

Peter Fidler

More-so, my mother's French-speaking Exovede / Métis father—a fifth generation paternal descendant of British explorer and fur-trader / HBC surveyor and map-maker **Peter Fiddler (**16 August 1769 – 17 December 1822**)** of Bolsover, Derbyshire, England and **Mary "Matheweman" Muskegon** *daughter of* ***Swampy Cree Chief Mackegonne of York Factory*** (*Hudson's Bay*) was mothered by an Exovede / Métis fourth generation daughter of **Julia Calcutt *nèe* Kittson** of Montréal—*whose grandson was part of the original syndicate that went on to create the Canadian Pacific Railway* and **Alexander Henry the Elder** and **Jean-Baptiste 'Okimawaskawikinam' Letendré *dit* Batoché**—a bowsman ('foremost voyageur in a canoe') for the North-West Company, interpreter, fur trader and farmer, and co-founder of the Batoché settlement.

[9] In 1820, **Sir John Franklin** estimated that there were one hundred and fifty lodges, with an average of eight persons to each lodge, or a total of twelve hundred persons. **John Rowand**, an old trader, in 1848 counted forty-five lodges, or three hundred and fifty persons. **Sir George Simpson** reckoned fifty lodges and three hundred and fifty persons in the year 1841: During the previous months of the ***small-pox*** he had counted at the **Marias' River** not less than one hundred **"*dead lodges*,"** in which there was an average of ten bodies. It is, *therefore*, difficult to make a correct estimate of this tribe with such conflicting testimony, but there is no doubt that the population must have been quite numerous, lessened at times through the ***depopulating ravages of plague and war***. They were said to be "the oldest of all the tribes that inhabit the plains," and the most independent and impudent tribe of Indians dwelling in the **British Northwest**. They have ever been ***friends and allies of the Blackfoot***, and ***enemies of the Crees***—notwithstanding, at times they have protected solitary Crees against the evil intentions of the other Blackfoot Confederacy tribes.

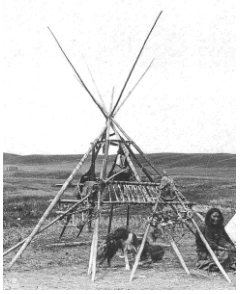
Sir John Franklin

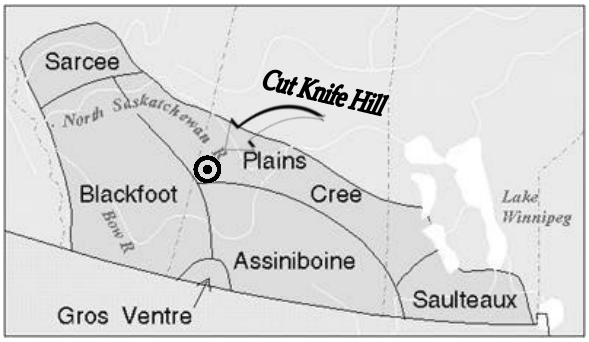
John Rowand

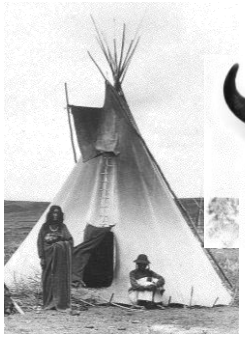
Sir George Simpson

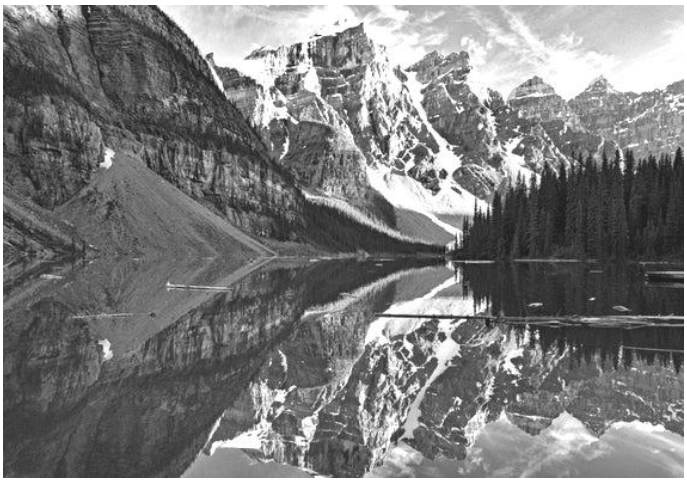
The Story of Kees-kih-koonan ("Broken Knife"), a Sarcée (Tsuut'ina)

A true pre-contact tale of how "the horse" first met *with* "the gun" on the Great Interior Prairies.









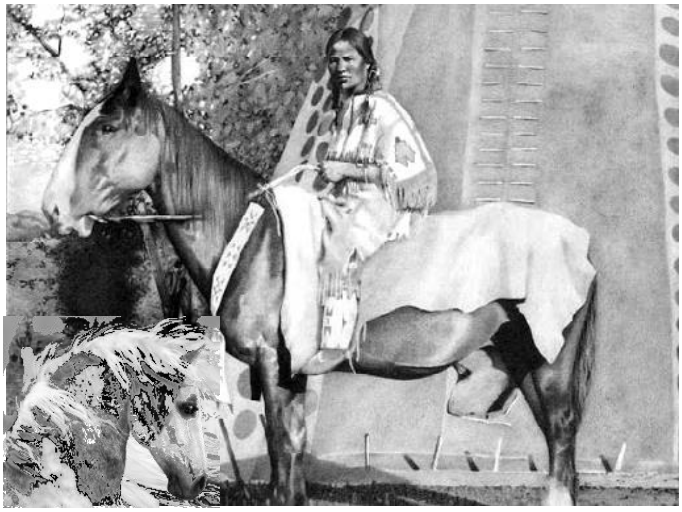
Moraine Lake is a glacially fed lake in Banff National Park, 14 kilometers outside the Village of Lake Louise, Alberta, Canada. It is situated in the Valley of the Ten Peaks, at an elevation of approximately 1884 metres. The lake has a surface area of 50 hectares.

Kees-kih-koonan

Now and then, small bands of Sarcée would leave 'this part of the country' to travel up to the **Beaver Hills** and **Edmonton** to trade. The storekeepers there would tell them *of* ***stories of a young Sarcée brave*** who had a prestigious reputation for fighting: ***Blackfoot***, ***Piegan***, ***Blood***, ***Stoney*** and ***Flathead***, and ***Cree Indians***, *too*… he had fought them all. **Many girls were given to him as wives**, but ***he refused to take a wife*** and… as time passed, *he* became a middle-aged man… still without a wife.

The storekeepers *also* said *that* this young Sarcée brave spoke a little of the ***Cree language***—*at that time it was not uncommon for people to speak other languages*.

His name was **Kees-kih-koonan ("*Broken Knife*")**.



It was said *that* one day, when Kees-kih-koonan was a ***middle-aged man***, he organized ***a war party***. He selected ***twenty-two young braves***, one of which was not an experienced fighter but, he owned ***a spyglass*** and ***a good runner***. Because of this, the youngster had been invited on several hunting expeditions and had proven him worthy every time. This was the reason Kees-kih-koonan wanted him in his war party.

When Kees-kih-koonan asked the lad along, the young man asked: "Kees-kih-koonan, what more do you want?"

Kees-kih-koonan thought this over, and then replied: "I want a Cree woman and Cree children."

"If we go we will not come back," said the young man. "The Crees have ***stronger medicine*** than we have": (He was referring to their having firearms, which they had gotten from the French Canadiénne voyageurs and Hudson's Bay Company traders).

"They are *also* ***smarter*** than we are…" replied Kees-kih-koonan—in mocking jest. "And they are ***better fighters***, *too*!?"

Others invited on the raiding party also asked Kees-kih-koonan, without success, to call it off. They all complained, each in turn saying: "The Cree are smarter than we are, and braver, and stronger, and they have **'fire-sticks'** (*i.e.*, 'long-guns')."

"They may be all that and more," replied Kees-kih-koonan; "but we have horses and they do not… and so when it is time to get away from them, we can outrun them on our ponies."

"We will go with you, but we will not come back! for if we let you go on alone… we will surely lose face with our relatives—and it would be better to die than be thought of as a coward."

"Old Woman," Kees-kih-koonan sneered: "If people did not die there would soon be too many people to share the earth. Do you want to live forever? We all die sooner-or-later… and it is better to die forever than to live one moment in shame."

They all agreed: "What you say is true! Otter died… Beaver died… Muskrat died… even Duck died. Only the 'Star People' above us live forever. You are right, Kees-kih-koonan! it is better for the people to die forever; for, if they did not die forever, they would live forever and never feel sorry for each other, and there would be no sympathy in the world." [1]

"I have chosen only the best men to join me on this adventure," said Kees-kih-koonan. "Every warrior whom I have invited on this raid is a noble brave… and has either ***counted coup*** on our enemies or sent them to the **Old Man** [2] without their hair…" Kees-kih-

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[1] During the flood, **Old Man** was sitting on the highest mountain with all the beasts. **The flood** was caused by '**"the above people**,' because the baby (a fungus) of "the woman who married a Star" was heedlessly torn in pieces by an Indian child.

Old Man sent *the* **Otter** down to get some earth. For a long time he waited, then *the* ***Otter came up dead***. Old Man examined its feet, but found nothing on them. Next he sent **Beaver** down, but after a long time he *also* came up ***drowned***. Again nothing was found on his feet. He sent **Muskrat** to dive next. Muskrat also *was* ***drowned***.

At length he sent *the* **Duck**. It, *too*, was ***drowned***, but in its paw held some earth. Old Man saw it, put it in his hand, feigned putting it on the water three times, and at last dropped it. Then **'the above-people'** sent ***rain***, and ***everything grew on the earth***.

[2] **Old Man** (Xalitsa or Halitsa in Sarcée, sometimes also known as Halitsa-tsinna or Chutigha): **Creator** and ***culture hero*** of **Sarcée mythology**. Old Man is ***a benign character who does many good deeds*** for the people, but unlike the creator gods of most other Athabaskan tribes, he is also ***a trickster*** figure who features in many humorous stories in which he behaves in undignified and unwise ways.

koonan chuckled—"and without their hair **Chutigha** won't know them!"

The night before they left for *the* Cree country, Kees-kih-koonan spoke with his father, saying: "If I am not home within a reasonable time, you must set some ***prairie grass*** on fire. If it burns fast, I am on my way home."

The War Party

In the morning, the Sarcée war party, with Kees-kih-koonan as their leader, painted their faces… and mounted their horses, having painted them for war, *as well*, and started off whooping and laughing, heading north toward Cree country: (Refer to Endnote: War Paint—for men and horses… and Body and Face Paint).

They arrived at **Sounding Lake** with their food nearly gone. Further on, at **Manitou Lake**, they were growing hungry and *they* were scared. From Manitou Lake ***they went east*** (*to about whereat the town of Neilburg is today*). Around present-day Lloydminster they saw the ***clouds of dust*** and heard ***rumbling of the earth*** that told of ***a buffalo hunt going on in the distance***—a distance of 80 km. They continued on, going north towards **Battle River**… then, they headed south-east following the river, walking their ponies through the dark foggy night towards a place which was known to the Cree as **Wolf Dung Hill** (*south of Lloydminster*)—a ***buffalo run*** [3] which overlooks the territory

of **Pitikwahanapiwiyin**, called "Poundmaker" by the White men—*supra*, whereat they arrived early in the dawn—whether it was the edge of night or break of day whence they arrived is not known.

Kees-kih-koonan killed ***an orphan buffalo calf*** for food and ordered his men to take the meat down into some bushes by a nearby creek and skewer it over a fire… so *that* its smoke would thin in the foliage and mix with the fog and not be easily seen… and, he *also* told them to roast enough to take with them.

He knew there was a band of Plains Cree nearby… but he did not know where. So, as the sun rose and his raiders made camp in the brush, Kees-kih-koonan climbed up the hill to scan the countryside. As the dayspring fog began to lift its cold, damp blanket off the sleeping earth, Kees-kih-koonan was just able to make out another hill to the east of him: (This hill was later to be named after him). [4]

*The '**Wolf People**'*

Now, after a buffalo hunt, there are many confused young ***calves*** wandering about… and, the ***milk in the second stomach of a calf*** was ***very delicious***. As Kees-kih-koonan watched, he saw what he thought were ***three wolves*** on the side of the other big hill in the distance. Scrambling down the slope of Wolf Dung Hill, he went to where his young tagalong was preparing the warrior's meat.

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[3] A **buffalo jump** is a cliff formation which Native Americans historically used to hunt and kill ***plains bison*** in mass quantities. The broader term **"game jump"** refers to a man-made jump or cliff with a deep drop that was used for hunting other game, such as reindeer.

Hunters herded the bison and drove them over the cliff, breaking their legs and rendering them immobile. Tribe members waiting below closed in with spears and bows to finish the kills—and the squaws and old women began dressing the beasts whilest their children played amidst the carnage. The people of the **Blackfoot Confederacy** called such buffalo jumps **"*pishkun*,"** which loosely translates as **"*deep blood kettle*."** This type of hunting was ***a communal event*** that occurred as early as 12,000 years ago and lasted until the mid-17th century, around the time of the introduction of horses and firearms—*infer*.

It was commonly believed that if any buffalo escaped these killings then the rest of the bison herds would learn to avoid humans, which would make hunting even harder

NB: Horses, as we know them today, were introduced into the Americas in the late-16th century by the ***Spanish explorers*** **Coronado *and* DeSoto**, who brought them with them from the **Gulf of Mexico** into **California**. Over the next two centuries ***the descendants of these horses***, having run wild, multiplied, and spread northwards, following the **Rocky Mountains** up into the **"Badlands,"** and eastwards into the **Great Interior Plains**. Such tribes as the Comanche and Cheyenne, Nez Percé, Shoshoni, Oglala Dakota, Crow and Blackfoot… to name a few, which had never seen such creatures before, thought of horses as **"Big Dogs,"** and either caught them as prizes and traded or stole them for prestige.

[4] This hill was later named after him as **"Keskikoman Asawapimowin"** (in Cree), or **"Más Mīk'áátùní Tsìs"** (in Blackfoot); both names are translated in English as **"Broken Knife's Lookout"** ***aka*** **"Cut Knife Hill."**

"I have just seen 'wolf people' on a nearby hill," he said to the men—addressing no one in particular. Then he spoke to the boy, saying: "Come with me… and bring your ***spyglass***."

Together they crawled up Wolf Dung Hill, staying low to ground, hidden in the long grass and brush-weeds. After the boy had taken a good look, he said to Kees-kih-koonan: "What you saw were not wolves. They are ***people skinning buffalo***." [5]

When Kees-kih-koonan heard this, he was very glad and became very excited. He sent the boy back down the hill to have the other men get ready for a fight… but kept the spyglass and lay still for a long while looking at the 'wolf people' on the other hill.

"Get ready for a fight," said the lad to the braves. "We are going to another hill where Kees-kih-koonan saw the ***'wolf' people skinning buffalo***."

Meanwhile, Kees-kih-koonan was thinking and making up a plan for to raid the 'wolf people' and steal their long-guns: "We will follow the river till we are opposite the hill, then we'll go south and search for their camp," he thought.

Here, I think, is where Kees-kih-koonan made ***his first mistake***! I believe he should have stayed on Wolf Dung Hill long enough to find out which way the 'wolf people' went to go home. Here, he was already beaten. So it was *that* when the band of Blackfoot raiders led by Kees-kih-koonan went east, toward the hill where they had seen the mysterious 'wolf people,' he had already lost the battle…

Weekaskookwasayin

A man named **Weekaskookwasayin** (***Sweetgrass*)** had a lodge in the ***Cree*** ("*Iyiniwok*"< "*the people*") camp. He was being visited at this time by ***a small boy*** ("*napesis*")—twelve-or-thirteen years of age. The youngster was eating broiled ***dogmeat*** ("*atimwîyâs*") when "a man" stepped into Weekaskookwasayin's lodge.

Weekaskookwasayin offered "the man" a piece of meat—and it was accepted.

"Very early, I am going back to ***the slaughtering grounds***," Weekaskookwasayin told his guests, "to get the orphan calves that come looking for their mothers."

"I will go with them," the young lad thought to himself as he walked home. Early next morning, the boy was awake and waiting outside Weekaskookwasayin's lodge. In a short time, Weekaskookwasayin appeared outside his teepee and began making preparation for leaving on a hunt—and *he* was soon joined by "the man" who'd visited him last evening.

The boy then followed after the two men… trying hard not to be noticed. But Weekaskookwasayin had seen him right off and knew *that* the boy was following after them. Notwithstanding, they rode south toward the hill which is now known as **"Cut Knife Hill" ("Broken Knife's Lookout")**. And, when Sweetgrass and "the other man" were about to "whereat ***Pah-chee-win*** now lives," they allowed the boy to catch up with them.

"Ah, you have come to hunt with us," Weekaskookwasayin said to the lad.

"Yes," replied the lad. "I have come to help."

The two men chuckled.

"Perhaps you will spare me a calf hide, so I may have a robe to cover me when I sleep this winter."

"You can have two calf hides if we are lucky and make a good kill," Weekaskookwasayin answered the boy.

Indeed, the three Cree made many kills with their long-guns, but as they were dressing their kills, Weekaskookwasayin noticed someone lying on top of the big hill opposite them… and, after watching the stranger for a long time, Weekaskookwasayin determined that their watcher was asleep… or dead… for the body on **Wolf Dung Hill** never moved. Nevertheless, as a precaution, he told the others to stop skinning their bison [6] and sent the lad running back to the Cree camp to warn the others of ***impending trouble***: (Their camp was located a short distance north of the hill—*whereat a man named **Wah-sap** was living until a just few years ago*). The Cree camp, *however*, was not visible to Kees-kih-koonan from the top of the hill he lay upon.

"Go back to camp and report this,"" said Weekaskookwasayin to the boy. "We will stay and keep watch on the stranger."

As soon as the boy had run off… Weekaskookwasayin instructed "the other man" to wait 'here' whilest he crept up closer to 'the stranger spying on them.'

No sooner had Weekaskookwasayin left, *though*, "the other man" began to get nervous, and so-being, he checked his gun… to see if it was loaded and ready to shoot—it accidentally went off with "a loud bang!" alerting *all* the painted Blackfoot braves in the scrub-brush by the crick. Every one of them took up their ***ootamuhikun*** ("*stone war-hammers*"—*a corruption of tomahawk*).

When the shot went off—the sleeper was suddenly awoken—and jumping to his feet he found himself face-to-face with Sweetgrass.

Weekaskookwasayin demanded: "Awayina kiya?" ("Who are you?")

"Niya oma **Keski-Koman**" ("I am Broken Knife"), replied the Sarcée.

"'*Ah-tenay*' **Kiche takosen**…! you are a famous person. Because of this, I am going to give you a chance, run south and you will escape safely, if you run north you will run into our camp and be killed," the Cree warrior warned.

Taking no time to look around, Kees-kih-koonan took off running downhill to his war party… and, tripping, he fell and rolled over-and-over head-over-heel down the hillside spilling arrows out of their

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[5] *Cf.*, **"American wolvers"**; *i.e.*, renegades from south of the border decimating the bison herds and committing ***prejudicial acts of genocide*** against the indigenous natives; ***mercenary rogues*** hired by ruthless land barons and "colonizers," bankers, railroaders and other industrial tycoons to exploit the buffalo-hunting lifestyle—and marking the beginning of the end for we plains' folk…

[6] It was a rare thing to chance upon such good fortune in those sad days since the appearance of the "White Man" and their ships and trains and "talking wires."

quiver upon his back. When he got to his feet and made like he was going to gather up his arrows, but glancing aback he saw 'Weekaskookwasayin' aiming his rifle at him… and bolted away at a fast run heading for the Sarcée camp… to warn his party of ***the 'wolf man'*** he'd seen on the other hill before falling asleep. If it wasn't for the loud bang of the long gun, he'd of thought it all a trickster dream.

The Lazy Man and the Beautiful Widow

It so happened *that* there was in the Cree camp lived ***a very beautiful woman… "a widow"*** ("*omiyosiw môsiskwêw*" < *a beautiful single woman*) whose newly-wed husband had been killed by ***Blackfoot raiders*** ("*ayahciyiniw*" < *Blackfoot-Slave stranger/outsider*). She had turned down all offers of marriage, saying she would marry the first man to bring her ***an enemy scalp*** ("*pukwâtipapitão*").

There was *also* ***a very useless and lazy man*** ("*kihtimikan*" < *a lazy bones*) in the camp—and he had had his eye on ***the beautiful widow*** a long time…and when he learned of her pledge, he had a brain wave: "Now's my chance; *perhaps* I can get ***an enemy scalp*** from ***the trader at Beaver Hills***, and get to marry the widow after all."

The lazy man was thinking this as he started walking in the direction of Kees-kih-koonan and his braves. He had not gone far when his uncle came upon him, riding a racer: "Get on the horse behind me, nephew," he said.

The uncle could see that something was on his nephew's mind: "What are you thinking about?"

So, the nephew asked his uncle if the rumour was true!? that the beautiful widow would marry the first man to present her with an enemy scalp… but, before he finished speaking, the young boy sent by Weekaskookwasayin to warn the Cree camp of the impending trouble came running up to them—and told them of the stranger.

"Maybe you can get a scalp today, ***"tehkwatim"*** (slang, "*my nephew*"), and then you can marry the beautiful widow," the uncle said, chuckling as he spoke.

The lazy man got on the horse, behind his uncle, and said nothing more.

Mihkokwan

The lazy man, whose name was **Mihkokwan (Red Feather)**, told his uncle *that* he was thinking of jumping into the trenches and trying to get the scalp of Kees-kih-koonan, or even his head, so he could marry the beautiful widow. His uncle agreed with him. "That is the way I got to marry your aunt," he said to Red Feather. But it seems he had competition; several braves were dangerously close to the earth-works, no doubt with the same thing in mind. Mihkokwan crept up to one of them who told him he would sing four times, then jump into the trench. Before he could start to sing, Mihkokwan jumped over him and into the trench, stabbing away with his knife, while braves fired into the trench, careful not to hit Mihkokwan.

In moments **Mihkokwan beheaded Kees-kih-koonan**, and was running back to his uncle carrying the head of Kees-kih-koonan. "We will now go back to the camp," said the uncle—and both got on the horse and started for the camp.

Thet had not gone far when the uncle saw ***a woman wearing a buckskin coat***. I believe the woman was standing about where **Snake Child** is now living. "There," he said to his nephew, "is your future wife."

They rode up to the woman, and the uncle did the talking. "Nitunis (*my daughter*)," he said, "I will now call you 'daughter' because you will be marrying my nephew. He was the first to jump into the trenches and has for you the head of the great Sarcée fighter—Kees-kih-koonan."

The woman had been crying, but stopped crying and accepted the head of ***Broken Knife***, wiping away her tears with the hair. All three of them then left for the camp together—the uncle on his horse and Red Feather and the beautiful widow walking side-by-side.

At camp, the widow took ***the head of Broken Knife*** to her teepee—to skin it of its scalp. Mihkokwan went to the lodge of his uncle to have a wash… as he was still covered with the blood of his enemy.

After skinning and stretching the scalp, the beautiful widow went to the lodge of Red Feather's uncle. "You may come home now, Red Feather," she said.

"Go, my nephew," said the old man. "You are now her husband, and I will be visiting you from time-to-time."

The lazy man—Red Feather, did not need much coaxing. He went home with the beautiful widow—a widow no longer. The head of Cut Knife was there, and Red Feather thought a victory dance should be held.

"A victory dance is to be held," said his wife. "It will be for four nights in a row. I will take the scalp of Broken Knife to these dances, while you stay home and keep the lodge."

And so, the wife of Red Feather did as he said… and he enjoyed four nights of dancing with his friends.

Ever since then the big hill on **Poundmaker Reserve** has been known to the Cree as **Kees-kih-koonan's Lookout** (*q.v.*).It is said that that ***warpath*** could still be seen a long time ago.

ENDNOTE

War Paint—for men and horses… and Body and Face Paint

Native American Indians had ***a highly complex warrior culture***, especially those "bison hunters" who lived on the **Great Plains**. Their religion was dominated by belief in ***a spiritual connection with nature***. Many tribesmen painted their bodies and faces for ***rituals***, ***dances*** and for ***battle***. The ***designs*** painted were believed to hold ***"medicine"*** ("*magic powers*") for protection.

Colors and **images** were *also* used to mark the warriors—both ***chiefs*** and ***braves*** were *thus* made to look more ferocious. Indians even ***painted their horses and ponies***—those which had them, decorating them with ***war symbols*** or ***symbols of power***.

Indians prepared the ***paint*** which was then ***dried*** and ***stored as a powder*** and kept ***in deerskin pouches*** which could be carried with them.

In their **totemic and animistic religion**, Indians ***blended rituals*** by ***promoting*** and ***preserving*** their ***nomadic hunting culture***—and, ***respect was shown to 'the spirits'*** for the survival of their people… their ***beliefs*** and ***traditions*** being handed down from one generation-to-another.

Experienced fighters were held in high esteem—the ***achievements of warriors*** were *often* ***reflected in the symbolic images of their war paint***. The ***clothes***, ***tepees*** and ***all belongings*** were decorated with the symbolism of his achievements and ***acts of heroism*** or his various ***spirit guides***. Every mark on the face and body of an Indian had meaning.

The war paint and insignia of an **Akicita**—*infer* of the **Lakota Sioux** had specific meaning as to the roles and responsibilities of ***elders*** and ***warriors of distinction***: They were *the* ***marshals of a war party***, depicted by ***two black stripes on the right cheek***; a ***marshal of an Indian camp*** had ***a black stripe painted on the right cheek from the corner of the eye to the jaw line***. A ***ceremonial marshal*** *who* organized ***pow-wows*** and ***large council meetings*** had a ***red parallel stripe***.

Amongst the **Lakota Sioux**, ***an elite society of highly respected elders*** was known as **"aki'cita"** (plural, "akicitas"; "ah-ki-chi-tah" or "ah-kee-chee-dah"; *i.e.,* **"*Red Feather*"**), which was *often* translated as **"*warrior*"** or **"soldier,"** meaning **"*having a strong or sacred voice*"**—implied ***a military peace-keeper*** and/or ***police-like function*** as **'*guardian'*** or **'*protector of the people*.'**

Amongst the **Siouan Iowa** (*Báxoje ich'é*; meaning "*sleepy people*") of Oklahoma, Kansas and Nebraska were divided into ***clans*** (*as follows*): ***Eagle***, ***Wolf***, ***Bear***, ***Pigeon***, ***Elk***, ***Beaver***, ***Buffalo*** and ***Snake***, *etc.*—and were distinguished one from another by ***the fashion in which the hair was cut***. The **"hand symbol"** indicated *that* the warrior has been ***successful in hand-to-hand combat***. The **"zig-zag"** line across the forehead symbolizes **"*lightning*"** which was believed to add ***power*** and ***speed*** to the warrior.

Common meanings of the colours and patterns of paint (*as follows*)**:**

Red (Díík'az) symbolized war, blood, strength, energy, power and success in war paint… but, it might also symbolize happiness and beauty in face paint.

Black (Dícgòc) was perceived as a "living" color and worn on the face to prepare for war. A very aggressive colour, black meant strength; but, it might also indicated that the wearer was a powerful warrior who had proved himself in battle. Black was also used to symbolize victory and might be applied before returning home to the camp

White (Dìigúc) symbolizes mourning. White was also the color of peace when it was used as face paint.

Blue symbolizes wisdom, confidence

Yellow (Díítsuw) is the color of death. Yellow also indicated that the wearer was heroic, had led a good life and was willing to fight to the death. It also symbolized intellect

Green symbolizes endurance. Green is associated with harmony and is a great healing power and *is* believed to improve vision

The colours ***purple*** and ***brown*** were not used as face or war paint

Native American Indians made use of "face painting" and/or "body paint" for various reasons (*as follows*):

War paint was used to intimidate enemies when going into battle or during warfare.

Marks of distinction and honour indicating achievements and success

Camouflage was used for *both* ***hunting*** and ***warfare***, enabling the wearer to blend into the environment and exercise the element of surprise.

Specific ***colors*** and ***patterns*** were applied for ***ceremonies***, ***dances*** and ***rituals***:

Visual messages were indicated, such as ***victory*** and ***mourning***, *etc.* by the application of face and body paint.

Mental Preparation: **Shamans** (*i.e.*, medicine men) often chose certain markings for warriors as ***powerful magic*** was passed on during the application of the war paint, helping the warrior to believe him invincible.

Paint was used as an element in **"spiritual healing."**

Power and Magic: It was believed *that* the application of certain ***symbols*** and ***colors*** afforded the wearer with **"strong medicine"** (*i.e.*, "*magic*") for ***power*** and ***protection*** by drawing on ***natural powers*** and combining these with ***the power of the warrior***. Such symbols included ***stripes***, ***circles*** and ***triangles***, *etc.*

Protection: Paint was commonly used ***to protect the skin*** from insects, the sun, the wind and the cold. **Red ochre** was in plentiful supply so this was the most common application—and has been since the Paleolithic era, hence the term **"Redskins."**

Decoration: ***War paint***, ***face paint*** and ***body pain***t was applied as decoration *(just as we use make-up today*). **Women** of certain tribes *also* used face and body paints for decoration.

Indians ***first smeared their bodies with buffalo or deer fat*** and ***then rubbed on the paint***. To add ***additional power*** the paint might be applied by the **Shaman** *viz.* **Medicine Man**. War paint was ***applied with the fingers***, ***animal bones***, ***sticks*** or ***grasses***.

Plains Indians used ***a spongy bone from the knee joint of the buffalo*** which held paint just as the modern fountain pen or tattoo gun holds ink.

Chiefs and elders often wore different colors to distinguish them from their inferiors.

SWEET GRASS SASKATCHEWAN INTERVIEW LOCATION: SWEET GRASS RESERVE SASKATCHEWAN TRIBE/NATION: CREE LANGUAGE: CREE DATE OF INTERVIEW: JULY 24, 1974 INTERVIEWER: ALPHONSE LITTLE POPLAR INTERPRETER: ALPHONSE LITTLEPOPLAR TRANSCRIBER: JOANNE GREENWOOD SOURCE: SASKATCHEWAN ARCHIVES BOARD TAPE NUMBER: IH-050 DISK: TRANSCRIPT DISC 16 PAGES: 11 RESTRICTIONS: THIS MATERIAL SHALL BE AVAILABE FOR READING, QUOTATION, CITATION, AND ALL OTHER RESEARCH PURPOSES, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE REGULATIONS WHICH MAY HAVE HERETOFORE BEEN OR WHICH MAY HEREAFTER BE ESTABLISHED BY THE SASKATCHEWAN ARCHIVES BOARD OR ITS SUCCESSORS FOR THE USE OF MATERIALS IN ITS POSSESSION; SUBJECT, HOWEVER, TO THE PROVISION THAT NO COMMERCIAL PUBLICATION OR BROADCAST OF THE INTERVIEW IN WHOLE OR IN PART SHALL BE MADE WITHOUT PRIOR WRITTEN PERMISSION OF THE INFORMANT, HIS HEIRS, LEGAL REPRESENTATIVES OR ASSIGNS. HIGHLIGHTS:

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